

The Esso Family Math Team attributes its success to:

❖ an effective leader;

The Project Director must have a commitment to the program and be prepared to lead by example. The leader must be able to develop an environment where team members can feel confident in placing their ideas on the table. It is essential that all ideas are appreciated and, once they are on the table, belong to the group rather than an individual. Ideas can then be constructively analyzed and modified without anyone feeling slighted. When feedback, effort and dedication from team members is valued, team spirit and team commitment remains high.

❖ a cohesive team;

The Esso Family Math Team was composed of a mix of people with diverse abilities, who collectively had the necessary expertise to develop and deliver a strong program. Team members were willing to work together and share ideas rather than operate as talented individuals.

❖ a sound program;

The program, designed to fill a current void in Ontario communities, is based on research findings in the areas of mathematics and Family Math. It focuses on making connections to the school curriculum, to everyday activities at home, and to rich literature. Math activities are fun and related to the real world.

❖ community interest;

Communities bought into the program. Large, established organizations adopted the program and participated in the ongoing training of volunteers and the delivery of family sessions.

❖ a flexible approach;

The Team expected and welcomed accommodations and adaptations that were required in order to meet community needs.

❖ ongoing support for communities;

Program resource materials were provided and ongoing informal support was always available. The Esso Family Math Team passed on their knowledge and expertise to many Family Math Leaders by acting as mentors and by providing Coordinator Training.

❖ informal, relaxed program settings;

Family sessions, held in community settings, started with an informal meal, allowing families, leaders and volunteers to communicate in a relaxed atmosphere.

❖ **a recognition of efforts;**

At all levels of the program, people were recognized for the efforts. Celebration nights were held for both volunteers and families.

❖ **attention to participant feedback;**

The program evolved through attention to participant feedback while still retaining its integrity.

❖ **benefits realized by parents.**

The program empowered parents by exposing them to the math language and teaching strategies being used in Ontario's best math classrooms. Parents' participation in the program also resulted in positive attitudes toward math and the realization that they have the skills necessary to help their children with math.

What We Have Learned ...

Community partners must be committed. You cannot “parachute” in the program and expect it to be successful. Community ownership is key.

The intent of the program must be emphasized. Esso Family Math is a program for families but it focuses on assisting parents with the skills they need to facilitate their children's mathematics development.

The program cannot be diluted. Some components are crucial, such as “Parent Talk”. You cannot provide the games and crafts without uncovering the math to parents.

It takes a group of trained individuals to deliver a successful program. One trained member of the team is not enough. Team members need to understand the purpose of the Family Math activities and also know their roles and responsibilities.

Sharing a meal is an integral part of the program.

Collecting participant feedback is extremely important. It allows all participants (leaders, volunteers and families) to feel valued and it provides the information necessary to ensure that programming meets the needs of each community.